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AUTHOR	Thomas, Jerold R.; Safrit, R. Dale
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ABSTRACT

Fourteen economic development practitioners were asked to participate in a modified Delphi study that attempted to provide a level of agreement about future trends and issues that affect economic development at the county level in Ohio. Literature from several fields was reviewed to find potential trends and issues and, using a Likert-type scale, statements presented to the experts in three rounds were dropped from the survey as they achieved consensus. Six major trends/issues a move to a new economy; increased importance of quality of life/sustainable development; continued importance of local economic development strategies; workforce development; financial incentives; and utility deregulation were discussed. Some of the implications that arose from the study are as follows: (1) the different educational and training needs of local economic developers should be explored; (2) local economic developers will need to prepare for new economy changes; (3) utility deregulation will need to be addressed; (4) workforce issues will be critical; (5) quality of life issues are important to citizens; (6) Ohio Extension should update this type of study on a regular basis and incorporate results into training, research, and policy formation; and (7) the modified Delphi should be considered for information collection by extension educators. (Contains 3 tables and 13 references.) (MO)

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Trends & Issues Affecting Economic Development in Ohio 2001-2005

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Strengthening Communities: Enhancing Extension's Role

Jerold R. Thomas
Ohio State University Extension
419.422.6106
thomas.69@osu.edu

R. Dale Safrit
North Carolina State University

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Few studies have focused on future tends and issues for local economic development (local is defined here as a county level unit in Ohio). Many studies have focused on specific local economic development issues or on trends at a regional and national, etc. level, but few have looked to the local level. As the practice of local economic development continues to professionallize and specialize itself, it becomes more important to add scholarly rigor to the field.

Purpose

This study was undertaken to determine trends and issues that may affect the practice of economic development at a county level in Ohio through 2005. The study is micro in that it looks at issues that affect economic development at the county level versus a

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macro study that looks at the entire state, region or country. It should be of interest to Extension Educators that are interested in determining local trends and are also interested in learning more about the Modified Delphi research instrument. Roles for the Extension are also provided at the end or the paper.

The Study Design

The study used a literature review to determine what experts in various fields thought were current and future issues in economic development. These trends were then organized into a three-part survey called a Modified Delphi Instrument. The Modified Delphi Instrument is a variation of the Delphi method developed by Dalkey and Helmer at Rand (Bell, 1997). Delphi instruments are based on using a panel of experts to provide a group judgment that is more accurate than individual findings (Bell; Ziglio, 1996). A goal of Delphi studies is to determine if consensus exists on issues. Consensus could be in agreeing or disagreeing with statements.

A Modified Delphi uses the following steps:

1.) A literature review is used to develop a preliminary set of questions or statements.
2.) A panel of experts is developed. Dalkey et al (1972) recommends at least 13 members to maintain replication (see reliability discussion below.
3.) The set of questions are distributed to the panel in a format to allow quantitative responses to the answers and qualitative feedback in the form of comments and recommendations for future questions.
4.) Quantitative responses are reviewed for consensus using a predetermined rule. Responses that achieve consensus are dropped from future rounds. Up to three rounds are used.
5.) Written feedback is reviewed and incorporated into future rounds. Panelists are able to view the feedback anonymously and consider it while making their choices.
6.) Traditional reliability is not important in a Delphi study due the use of targeting an expert panel. Dalkey et al (1972) noted that replicability is more important, and can be increased using at least 13 panelists. Content and face validity are the two validity concerns for Delphi studies, and can be controlled with an expert review panel.

The Ohio Modified Delphi Study

Fourteen economic development practitioners were asked to participate as a panel (via mail) in up to three rounds of a survey to provide a level of agreement on statements about future trends and issues. Panelists were identified via a reputation survey (Boone, 1985). The goal of the survey was to determine agreement or disagreement on various statements. Statements were withdrawn if 80% were in within two points on a six point Likert-type scale. Panelists added comments that had the possibility of becoming statements in a future round. Panelists' statements were independently reviewed by two additional economic development experts and the author who each suggested future questions.

Three rounds of the survey were completed. The first round contained 27 statements. All but two of the statements achieved consensus and were dropped from the survey. Four new statements were added to round two of the survey based on panel feedback, for a total of six statements (including two from round one). All but one of the statements achieved consensus and no new questions were developed. Round three contained one statement and did not achieve consensus. After three rounds and 33 statements, only one did not generate consensus. That statement, asking about utility deregulation, actually generated a higher standard deviation with each round.

Literature and Survey Findings

Literature from several fields was reviewed to find potential trends and issues. One challenge was that most trends are presented on a macro versus micro scale. Much of the literature on local economic development have focused on anecdotal information – basically descriptions of successful local programs. Six major trends/issues are discussed below, along with the related survey questions from each area.

A move to a new economy

Not to be associated solely with technology-based companies, this trend refers to the increased use of information technology by all companies and other related trends like globalization of the world markets (Atkinson, 1999; Mandel, 1996; and Norton, 1999). A move to a New Economy does indicate an end to the business cycle, inflation, and other economic conditions (DeLong, 1999;

Weinstein, 1997). These trends force companies to adopt new technology and use organizational methods centered on these technologies. The greatest potential impact for the New Economy will be with traditional companies that use net-to-net technologies, enhanced just-in-time inventories, electronic billing, etc.

Survey Results

-International trade will have an increased impact
-Companies will invest more in machinery and equipment than in additional jobs
-Communities will need to invest in technology infrastructure like fibreoptics to compete in the economy over the next five years
-Even low technology companies will require high technology infrastructure to their site
-The continual movement of workers due to layoffs or voluntary movement will not decrease
-Communities will become more dependent on service jobs instead of manufacturing jobs
-City/county funding for local economic development will not increase – ***added in second round and achieved consensus***

Increased importance of quality of life/sustainable development

This refers to the growing concern for quality of life issues in industry location, rural urban interface, and community planning. Daniels (1999) notes that terms like NIMBY (not in my backyard), LULU (Local Unwanted Land Use), and BANANA (build absolutely nothing near at all near anything) are commonly linked to this trend. Other issues like land use planning, watershed management and farmland preservation are also a part of this issue. Community development issues have also become more important (Grisham and Gurwitt, 1999). Moss and Grunkemeyer (1999) note that there has been an increased interest in sustainable development among local economic development practitioners.

Survey Results

-Economic Developers will need to develop more community development skills (like leadership development, land use planning, etc.)
-Economic developers will need more consensus building skills

-Sustainable development issues will become more important
-Land use issues will play a more prominent role in local economic development decisions
-Local citizens will question new development activities more often
-Job creation will be the major criteria used to determine the success of economic developers
-Local planning efforts will be more long-range in their focus – ***consensus in round two***
-Social issues will become an important issue related to economic development in the future – ***added in second round and achieved consensus***
-Environmental impact will be an increasing concern for economic development projects – ***added in second round and achieved consensus***

Continued importance of local economic development strategies

Current "bread and butter" strategies like Business Retention and Expansion, Attraction of Business and Industry, and new business formation/increased consumer spending will continued to be important strategies for local economic development (Blaine et al, 1999). Morrison and Dodd (1995) have noted that R&E will continue to be a key strategy.

Survey Results

-Retention and expansion strategies will be more important than other economic development strategies
-Marketing will be one of the most important skills for the economic developer
-Cluster development strategies (nurturing and attracting related industries) will be an important strategy
-Starting local businesses will be as important of a strategy than attempting to attract new businesses
-Economic development professionals will need advanced training in new development strategies

Workforce Development

The development of all aspects of the current, future and potential workforce is a critical issue for local economic development (Morrison & Dodd, 1999). This study was conducted during a tight labor market prior to the 2001 economic downturn. Yet

workforce development is still critical because of the continued change in the economy. Workforce development can be focused on existing workers, unemployed or underemployed workers, and future workers (kids in school).

Survey Results

-Communities will need to develop comprehensive workforce development strategies involving numerous local shareholders
-Communities will need to invest more in the skills of the current workforce
-Workforce training for high school students will increase
-Workforce training for current workers will increase
-Workforce training for the unemployed and underemployed will increase

Financial Incentives

Financial incentives are often viewed by practitioners as tools to help close a deal; they often serve as a "tie-breaker" between closely comparable sites (Gamble, 1999). Financial incentives will face closer public scrutiny and will likely have more clawback provisions in them (Iannone, 1999).

Survey Results

-Financial incentives will become more important in "making projects happen"
-Performance issues for financial incentives will become more common
-The quality of jobs will be used to determine the success of economic developers

Utility deregulation

In 2001 utility deregulation was a hot topic for local economic developers. Utilities had long been a funder of local economic development programs, and had been willing to subsidize local utility infrastructure improvements in return for having a captive utility user. Griffin and McCourt (1999) noted that deregulation has severely lessened the incentive for utilities to subsidize the

extension of utilities (because they now my only serve as a transmission or distribution agent versus a generator of electricity), causing companies or communities to pay for these improvements.

Survey Results

-Utility deregulation will have a negative affect on local economic development strategies ***This was the only statement to not achieve consensus. The responses became more polarized with each round.***
-Given utility deregulation and other forces, the importance of the local economic development practitioner in a community will increase – ***added in second round and achieved consensus***

Implications

Several implications can be explored based on this study. They are discussed below.

1.) Exploring the different educational and training needs of local economic developers. Some areas to look at include advanced economic skills (need to be defined), community development skills like facilitation, land use planning, etc., and dealing with controversial issues. Extension is well positioned to provide outreach education to many of these issues. OSU Extension has county-based, district-based, and state-based community development professionals who can assist in these endeavors.

2.) Local economic developers will need to prepare for New Econo[illegible]y changes. These include technological infrastructure issues, globalization issues, and workforce preparation. As inves[illegible]ments in machinery and capital equipment rise in relation to labor, what criteria should be used for incentives, community investment, etc. Traditional manufacturing and other industries are still critical, but they will need New Economy skills and infrastructure. Extension can assist with training, assistance in developing pilot or best practice applications in helping communities move to new infrastructure, new company needs, etc.

3.) Utility deregulation will need to be addressed or at least strategies developed to help communities overcome the cost of

utility infrastructure. Extension can provide key applied research and best practice methods in this area.

4.) Workforce issues will be critical. Training and upgrading skills are still critical for high-paying jobs and investment. Extension has long maintained a strong program in educational programming and has often partnered with local job training agencies. A possible key role for Extension will be in serving as a coordinator to the myriad of agencies involved in workforce issues, and to help communities to develop comprehensive workforce strategies.

5.) More work needs to be done to flesh out ideas from this study. Focus groups or other information gathering techniques should be used to determine specific training needs and current issues of concern. This should be done on a regular basis. In Ohio, this study is being used by the Ohio Development Association to seek input at their 2002 Spring Conference (the conference usually attracts around 200 participants) for economic development policy. Extension Educators will present the results and will lead small discussion groups to provide feedback. The results will then be used by the Ohio Department of Development in making new policy decisions.

6.) Quality of life issues are important to citizens. Economic developers will need to develop skill to work with the public on controversial issues. Likewise, public interest in sustainable development and environmental issues will continue to rise. This is a critical issue for Extension to address. More work needs to be done in developing applicable sustainable development programs and measurements. There is also a role for Extension in providing training and community programs in this area.

7.) Ohio Extension should update this type of study on a regular basis, and work with the Ohio Development Association and the Ohio Department of Development to incorporate the results into training, research and policy formation.

8.) The Modified Delphi should be considered by Extension Educators wanting to collect information from experts versus a random sample. New computer technologies should allow for a rapid return of a powerful instrument.

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Results from Round 1

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Mildly Disagree (3)	Mildly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation
1.) Workforce training for high school students will increase			11	111	111111	11	4.62	5.00	5.00	0.96
2.) Workforce training for current workers will decrease	11111	11111111					1.62	2.00	2.00	0.51
3.) Workforce training for the unemployed and underemployed will increase	1			1111	1111111	11	4.57	5.00	5.00	1.22
4.) Retention and expansion strategies will be more important than other economic development strategies	1	1		1111	11111	111	4.43	5.00	5.00	1.45

Table 1: Responses from Round 1of the Study: Frequency, mean, mode, median, and standard deviation

(CONTINUED)

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Mildly Disagree (3)	Mildly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation
5.) Marketing will be one of the most important skills for the economic developer				11	111111111	111	5.07	5.00	5.00	0.62
6.) Cluster development strategies (nurturing and attracting related industries) will not be an important strategy	11	11	1111111	111			2.79	3.00	3.00	0.97
7.) Starting local businesses will be a less important strategy than attempting to attract new businesses	1	11111111	11		111		2.71	2.00	2.00	1.33

(CONTINUED)

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Mildly Disagree (3)	Mildly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation
8.) Economic developers will need to develop fewer community development skills (like leadership development, land use planning, etc.)	111	1111111111	1				1.86	2.00	2.00	0.53
9.) Sustainable development issues will become more important			1	1111	111111	11	4.69	5.00	5.00	0.85
10.) Land use issues will play a less prominent role in local economic development decisions	11111	11111	11	11			2.07	1.00	2.00	1.07

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Mildly Disagree (3)	Mildly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation
12.) Local citizens will question new development activities more often		1	111	111	111111	1	4.21	5.00	4.50	1.12
13.) Job creation will be the major criteria used to determine the success of economic developers		111	1	11111	11111		3.86	4.00	4.00	1.17
14.) International trade will have an increased impact on local economic development			11	11	11111111	11	4.71	5.00	5.00	0.91

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Mildly Disagree (3)	Mildly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation
15.) Companies will invest less in machinery and equipment than in additional jobs	1111111111	111	1				1.36	1.00	1.00	0.63
16.) Communities will need to invest in technology infrastructure like fibreoptics to compete in the economy over the next five years			1	1	111	111111111	5.43	6.00	6.00	0.94
17.) Even low-technology companies will require high technology infrastructure to their site		1		1111	1111111	11	4.64	5.00	5.00	1.01

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Mildly Disagree (3)	Mildly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation

18.) Financial incentives will become more important in "making projects happen"			1111	111111	111	1	4.07	4.00	4.00	0.92
19.) The quality of jobs will be used to determine the success of economic developers		1	1	1111111	11111		4.14	4.00	4.00	0.86
20.) Communities will need to develop comprehensive workforce development strategies involving numerous local shareholders				1	1111111	111111	5.36	5.00	5.00	0.63

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Mildly Disagree (3)	Mildly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation
21.) Local planning efforts will be less long-range in their focus	11	111111	11	111	1		2.64	2.00	2.00	1.22

22.) The continual movement of workers to different jobs due to layoffs or voluntary movement will decrease		1111111	111111	1			2.57	2.00	2.50	0.65
23.) Communities will need to invest more in the skills of the current workforce				111111	111	11111	4.93	4.00	5.00	0.92

40

(CONTINUED)

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Mildly Disagree (3)	Mildly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation
24.) Communities will become more dependent on service jobs instead of manufacturing jobs			1111	11111111	11		3.86	4.00	4.00	0.66
25.) Economic developers will need fewer consensus building skills	1111111111	11	1				1.29	1.00	1.00	0.61

41

26.) Economic development professionals will need advanced training in new development strategies				11111	111111111		4.64	5.00	5.00	0.50

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Mildly Disagree (3)	Mildly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation
27.) Performance issues for financial incentives will become more common				1111	1111111111		4.71	5.00	5.00	0.47
28.) Utility deregulation will have a negative affect on local economic development	1	11	1	11111	1111		3.69	4.00	4.00	1.32

Results from Round 2

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Mildly Disagree (3)	Mildly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation

1.) Local planning efforts will be less long-range in their focus	1	11	111111	11			2.82	3.00	3.00	0.87
2.) Utility deregulation will have a negative affect on local economic development	11	1	1111	11	1	1	3.18	3.00	3.00	1.54
3.) Given utility deregulation and other forces, the importance of the local economic development practitioner in a community will increase		1		11	1111	1111	4.91	5.00	5.00	1.22

Table 2: Round 2: Frequency, mean, mode, median, and standard deviation. (CONTINUED)

TABLE 2: CONTINUED

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Mildly Disagree (3)	Mildly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation
4. City/county funding for local economic development will increase		11111	11	1111			2.91	2.00	3.00	0.94

5. Social issues will become a less important issue related to economic development in the future	1	111111	11		11		2.64	2.00	2.00	1.29
6.) Environmental impact will be an increasing concern for economic development projects			1	111	111111	1	4.64	5.00	5.00	0.81

Results from Round 3

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Mildly Disagree (3)	Mildly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation
1.) Utility deregulation will have a negative affect on local economic development	11	1	1	1	11111	1	3.82	5.00	5.00	1.78

Table 3: Round 3: Frequency, mean, mode, median, and standard deviation.

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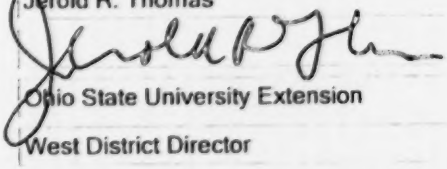
Signature:	
Organization:	Ohio State University Extension
Position:	West District Director
Address:	1219 West Main Cross Street Suite 202
Zip Code:	45840-0702
Telephone No:	419-422-6106
Fax:	419-422-7595
E-mail:	thomas.69@osu.edu
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